# Moral Reform

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A. C. Campbell

# MORAL REFORM.

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# SERMON

DELIVERED AT UTICA, ON SABBATH EVENING, FEBRUARY 16, 1834,

Samuel Clark Aikin

BY S. C. AIKIN,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

UTICA:
R. B. SHEPARD, PRINTER, 44 GENESEE STREET.
M DCCC XXXIV.

Utica, February 17, 1834.

Rev. S. C. Aikin—

Dear Sir—Having last evening listened, with great pleasure and instruction, to your Sermon, on the sin, immorality, and general evils of Libertinism, we respectfully request that you will furnish us with a copy for publication. We deem the publication desirable, not only for the intrinsic merits of the discourse, but for its faithful denunciation of a vice, against which young men in particular need to be warned. A vice from which nothing can probably save them, but a clear apprehension of the change that public opinion is undergoing, in relation thereto, conjoined with a correct conception of the tendencies of the vice, physical, moral, and spiritual. We think, also, that the publication is desirable from the fact that it treats of an offence on which the clergy of our country, (though not of Europe,) have been hitherto strangely silent—a silence that we are happy to see thus successfully broken: and which we hope will continue to be broken, until every pulpit in our land shall discourse of the offence, as frequently and as strenuously as its enormity demands.

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| A. B. JOHNSON, | JONAS FAY, |
| SPENCER KELLOGG, | WILLIAM TRACY, |
| J. W. DOOLITTLE, | SAMUEL LIGHTBODY, |
| THOMAS WALKER, | T. POMEROY, |
| J. KIRKLAND, | MOSES BAGG, |
| SAMUEL STOCKING, | JOHN G. FLOYD, |
| J. H. OSTROM, | S. HOLMES, |
| SAMUEL THOMSON, | A. GRANT, |
| B. F. COOPER, | M. M. ELLIS, |
| ASAHEL SEWARD, | WILLIAM J. BACON. |

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Messrs. A. B. Johnson, S. Kellogg, and others—

Gentlemen—I herewith transmit you a copy of my discourse, agreeably to your request. Confiding in your judgment, that it may tend to check one of the crying sins of the age, I consent to its publication. I do it the more readily from having learnt that in some particulars I am greatly misapprehended. I have taken the liberty to add a few notes, which I trust may be useful.

With great respect,

Your friend and servant,

Utica, February 18, 1834.

S. C. AIKIN

# SERMON.

"Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Prov. vii. 27.

What a picture this book gives of the crime of lewdness! The painter threw upon canvass the reality as it existed three thousand years ago, and, it is worthy of notice, that since that period it has undergone no essential change. I question, whether in the infancy of the world, and in the days of ignorance that followed, this vice was generally more prominent or prevalent, even among gentiles, than it is at the present moment, in some towns and cities in these United States.

I make no apology for bringing this subject before a Christian congregation. I give no pledge to hold my peace, even after speaking once, unless the friends of virtue pledge themselves to act.

As one set for the defence of religion and public morals, I acknowledge my error in having remained silent so long. I am happy to make the confession; for, with my present convictions of duty, whatever may be the views of my respected fellow-laborers in the ministry, until I expose the nakedness of this vice, and sound a note of alarm in this community, I can never say with the apostle, that "I am pure from the blood of all men," and, that "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

My office out of the question, I hold no parley with that morbid fastidiousness which trembles and shrinks from any open and manly effort to cure the evil. Nor have I the least regard or veneration for that artificial and sickly delicacy, which, for ages, has bound the friends of virtue in fetters of iron, and charmed them into a most fatal silence and apathy. I believe it to be in part the creature of a false education, and in part the wily policy of the devil, to maintain his empire of pollution, by assuming so great and over-weening a regard for purity,

as to be unable to endure the disclosures of vice. To cover up, to cover up, is the master policy of the prince of darkness. "He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Well fitted to sustain and advance his nefarious purposes, is the doctrine, coolly and deliberately advocated by the friends of virtue, yes, and by the pimps of vice also, that here is an immorality not to be spoken of in public. We may contemplate it in pictures, in books, in caricatures, as drawn by the moralist, the satirist, and the artist; we may see innocence seduced and ruined, and the villain walking the street and receiving the courtesies of the virtuous; we may know that haunts of crime are standing by day and night under the shade of our church-steeples; we may see our sons and daughters entering them, never to return, and in secret lamentation spend the residue of life, and finally sink in sorrow to our graves; we may see that cloud of wrath gathering over our land, which overthrew Sodom, the nations of Canaan, Babylon, and Nineveh; we may hear the dark waters rumbling beneath our feet, and breaking up the foundations of personal, domestic, and civil happiness; in short, we may see the monster invade the sanctity of the church, and plant his foot upon the very altar of God; but we must say nothing; we must do nothing. The habits of society—the claims of modesty demand silence, forbid action. Our lips are hermetically sealed, while the heart is bursting with anguish! The principle is absurd and cruel; unnatural, irrational, and anti-christian. True virtue spurns its aid. Unaffected, native, heaven-born delicacy contemns the simpering smiles of the serpent, which, under the pretence of great regard for virtue's cause, allows the young and beautiful of our land to rush in untold numbers, unheeded and unwarned, down to the bottomless pit.

I have not come here to portray the evils of lewdness as they exist in our cities. Were it proper or practicable, I have not the vanity to believe it to be within the compass of my talent to do it. Nor is the genius of Milton, or the pencil of Raphael competent to the task. It is a mystery of iniquity that must, to a great degree, remain hidden till the judgment, because it beggars description.

These remarks are not made on the strength of report. The Providence of God once placed me as a missionary in the city of New York. In company with the friends of humanity, I have visited the abodes of abandonment to attend upon the dead, and to preach the

gospel to the living; and I should as soon think of drawing a picture of hell itself, as giving a complete view of one of its outer courts.

Were it my object to depict the demoralizing influence of the crime of lewdness upon society, perhaps it could not be done better than by holding up the history of France, in the days of her pollution and blood. "In that reign of infidelity and terror," says an eloquent writer, "it should never be forgotton, that contempt for the laws of chastity, and breaking loose from the legalized restraints of virtue, were the order of the day, and of the night. A republican or infidel marriage was in derision, and, by the vile themselves, denominated the *sacrament of adultery!* Prostitutes were enthroned—borne in triumph—and even worshipped as the goddesses of reason and the guardians of public morals and happiness. Lust and rapine, hand in hand, waded through clotted blood in the streets of Paris. Thus, when the ten commandments, and especially the fourth and seventh, were publicly abrogated in France, the mighty God stood aloof, and a scene of proscription, of assassination and woe ensued, unparalleled in the annals of the civilized world. In the city of Paris, there were, in 1803, eight hundred and seven suicides and murders. Among the criminals executed, there were seven fathers who had poisoned their children—ten husbands who had murdered their wives—six wives who had poisoned their husbands, and fifteen children who had assassinated their parents! Within eighteen months after the abrogation of the marriage covenant, in that reprobate kingdom, twenty thousand divorces were effected. In the space of ten years, three millions of human beings, as is computed, perished by violence, in that land of infidelity and lust."*

France discarded the Bible. The Almighty withdrew his restraining hand, and permitted a nation to try the experiment of living without religion. Human passions broke loose from moral responsibility, and flowed in torrents of pollution and blood. The world stood agast, and trembled at the spectacle, and the result stands out in bold relief upon the records of that ill-fated kingdom. Let us mark it well, and remember the fearful denunciation of Jehovah: "Ye shall not commit any of these abominations, that the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations which were before you."

The whole tribe of libertines are so many vultures upon the body

*Waterman's Address to the friends of moral reform in Providence.

politic. Religion, patriotism, domestic peace, and public tranquillity, are strangers to their bosoms. There is nothing lovely, nothing valuable on earth with which they are not at war. Beauty, health, reputation. The marriage covenant—that strong defence and glory of society—and all the tender sympathies and relations of social life, wither and die under their blighting touch. One house of abandonment in a community, is worse than the cholera. The noxious miasma perpetually issuing from it, poisons all the fountains and streams of life. It is impossible to estimate its baneful influence upon private and public morals. If the fire consumes your dwelling or merchandize, it is a loss which industry and economy will restore. If the pestilence removes our friends to another world, it permits them to leave behind a good name. If the pirate seizes upon his victim, he either kills or sends him adrift upon the high seas. If the robber or assassin enters a shop or family, they can at the most only take a little property, or the lives of a few individuals; and when the deed is committed, public indignation stands ready to burst upon them, and to hand them over to justice. But the libertine—more horrible than the pestilence, the pirate, the robber, or the boa-constrictor—rushes from his ambush, throws his deadly coils around his victim, not to give repose in death, but to bury alive in the grave of infamy. In what a fearful condition must be that town or city, where such demons in human shape collect and roam at large! Where is safety or happiness in the midst of such prowling wolves, and, especially, when the public mind is overawed by their number and reputed respectability, and no voice dares utter a complaint—no Putnam dares enter the den?

I say nothing of the untold wretchedness which the devotee of lust entails upon himself. Like Cain he is marked and known. An insulted God has stamped his abhorrence of the crime in lines of wrath upon the guilty victim. The broad curse of heaven rests upon him even in this world, and we know that nothing but reformation and deep repentance can save him from the unutterable woes of hell.

The crime of lewdness, like intoxication, besides the havoc it makes of health, character, usefulness, morals, and religion; and the indescribable miseries which follow in its train, through time and eternity, imposes an enormous tax on community. It is estimated that this vice alone costs the citizens of New York and vicinity, more than twelve millions of dollars a year! Incredulity may well startle at such a

statement, and pronounce it a libel; but, says one, who may be supposed to have minutely examined the subject, "I am persuaded that it *approximates* the truth."

This small city doubtless pays in proportion to its population; for vice, whether on a large or small scale, cannot be sustained without expense. The time is not far distant when the good sense and rectified taste of community will bear some statistics on this subject; and when that time arrives, if no other motive can move, public opinion, like mounted pieces of artillery, will pour upon the lines of licentiousness a stream of fire, spreading terror and dismay through the camp, and causing the whole tribe of panic-struck libertines either to flee their country, or become sober and virtuous citizens.

Were this enormous sum drawn entirely from the pockets of the abandoned, it would not be a matter of so much regret. But it is not so. As a general truth they have no money, and can live only by plunder and robbery. Most of it comes from the sober, the virtuous, the industrious citizen. It is fraudulently taken from him by those who are bound to be faithful in his service. A gentleman in Newark, N. J. assures us, that, during the last fourteen years, he has lost not less than twenty thousand dollars, by profligate men in his employ. Similar facts are not unfrequently disclosed; and who can tell how many failures of men in business are occasioned by the profligacy of young men, who rob their employers, to carry on their nefarious traffic? Libertines and debauchees may sneer at such allusions. It is not to be expected that minds and hearts steeped in abominations will be moved by considerations that affect private rights or the public weal. But it is time the veil was torn off the pur-blind eye of community. It is time to speak out, and, I bless God, there are a few apostles* of

*At the head of those who have enlisted in this noble cause, is the Rev. John R. McDowall, of New York. His untiring effort, self-denial, and magnanimity, entitle him to the sympathy, the confidence, and the liberal support of the friends of virtue. While we have numerous papers devoted to temperance, his Journal is the only periodical, with which I am acquainted, that professes to be exclusively the advocate of Christian purity. I am aware that it is objected by some good people, that it is too minute and open in the disclosure of vice. In some instances the author *may* have erred, and where is the editor who does not? Yet, as a constant and attentive reader, I must say, that I have discovered no such instance: and, I venture to affirm, that no person can peruse the startling facts and thrilling appeals of the Journal, however pure may be his mind, without imbibing an increasing abhorrence of unchastity. If those already contaminated are made worse by the perusal, then they must be past redemption. They cannot be reclaimed by truth. With God's full record of burning light in their hand, they

virtue in our land, who have entered upon the work of reform with a zeal that would have done honor to the age of Luther.

I am not unapprized that more courage and self-denial are needed in this work than in the temperance reform. The enemy, if not quite so numerous, is more subtle, inveterate, and determined, and entrenched behind mightier bulwarks. Of these, not the least is that strange, that foolish and infatuated pretence for delicacy, which, like a gag-law, would stop every mouth, and paralize every effort. It pleads for the suspension of all hostility, and would fain persuade us that the evil, if let alone, will cure itself. But we have seen the fallacy of the plea long enough. It has been let alone. The friends of virtue have stood silently by, and witnessed the river of death, century after century, pouring its guilty millions into the lake of Sodom. They have stood by and done nothing, until our land, in its length and breadth, has become polluted, and is well nigh ripe for destruction.

The truth is, the principle contended for is false. It holds good as to no other crime. It is urged in no other case, and, it is reasoning against facts and against evidence to suppose, that a vice so stubborn, so deeply rooted in the human heart and in society, will work its own cure. It is not a dark thunder-cloud that contains the elements of its own purification. It is rather a volcano, whose accumulated fires grow more intense and terrible by eruption. It is an exhaustless Vesuvius, which, age after age, pours forth its rivers of lava, and still fills and groans, and pours out more.

Nothing but the grace of God, and the power of public opinion, can put down the vice. But this power cannot be enlisted unless the evil

will go on and sin and perish. If, as is pretended, the paper is so happily calculated to spread and perpetuate the mischief, why are the devotees of lust so universally and inveterately opposed to the author? Why threaten to demolish his house and take his life, when he is so successfully contributing to build up their cause? One would suppose they would furnish him money, receive his sheets, and scatter them as tracts all over the land. Truly, here is a marvellous incongruity! What can it mean? What can be their motive? Is it out of compassion to their brethren, or from the dread of augmented misery in themselves that they wish to kill McDowall, lest he be instrumental in bringing others to their place of torment? Strange conduct! It shows, however, that the shots take effect, and is an unanswerable argument against the popular objection, whether made by friends or foes. I do earnestly entreat all who love their country, purity, and righteousness, to step forward and sustain the Journal. Should it now fail for the want of support, the time may not come for centuries, when the world will have another devoted to the same object. That such a paper is needed and indispensable, requires no proof. The evil must be measured out to the eye of the public, or there is no remedy.

be spread out before the public eye. Now, an objection formidable to the minds of many is, that a developement of facts would have a tendency to "excite curiosity, vitiate the mind, and pollute the imaginations of the young; and thus tend to perpetuate rather than supplant the evil." I know not but the crime may be so developed as to do mischief. The philanthropist may possibly enter so much into detail, as unwittingly to furnish a passport to the uninitiated. I advocate the circulation of no such knowledge. Nor is it needed. Our noble reformer* in prison discipline, does not deem it necessary, in order to effect his purpose, to exhibit to the eye of the public, the false keys and instruments he has obtained from reformed convicts. But he tells us such instruments are in his possession, with a view to put the public on their guard. The truth, in relation to the vice before us, so far as it can be told consistently with Christian delicacy, must be exhibited, or the slumbering community will never be roused to adopt measures adequate to remove it. But the objection is materially lame in one point. It assumes as a fact, that the great mass of our youth are already uncontaminated. In thus doing, it takes for granted what is not true. I do not say that the great majority are involved in actual crime. But the mystery of iniquity is already at work. The process is going on. The poison is circulating among our youth, and but few escape its pollution. Must fathers and mothers and sisters be told that the enemy has daily access to their sons and brothers? Need they be informed that, by means of books, plates, and pictures, vice, without an antidote, is exhibited in all its winning forms? Let not parents boast too much of the unsullied virtue of their children. To suppose their minds and hearts entirely uncontaminated, would be to suppose a miracle. Your children are neither deaf nor blind. If they walk the streets, they cannot help hearing the language of obscenity. If they open their eyes, they cannot avoid seeing the symbols of depravity upon our lamp-posts, our fences, and, I blush to name it, upon the very walls of our sanctuaries! It is preposterous to talk of unalloyed purity in this licentious age. In the infant that smiles in the cradle, you may find it, but scarcely out of the nursery.† In the streets, in schools, in shops, the contagion is spreading like leaven in meal, and is reaching, silently, it is true, but surely, every class of children in community.

* The Rev. L. Dwight. † I wish to be understood as referring only to purity in respect to this particular vice.

Now, when things are thus, shall the friends of virtue remain quiet? Shall they sit still and suffer their sons and daughters to be beguiled and ruined? Shall they strike a truce with the bold and dauntless enemy, when at every corner he stands ready to devour? Shall we not rather proclaim war, offensive and defensive, and brandish the weapons which the God of heaven has put into our hands? The war is proclaimed. Let him who dares stand aloof from the contest. God Almighty has decreed the ruin of the foe. Under the broad banner of his eternal law, we take our stand, and we mean to echo it from sea to sea, and from continent to continent—"*thou shalt not commit adultery.*"*

In our attempts to eradicate this vice, as in all other departments of reform, we must rely chiefly on the power of the Gospel. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." Let truth be presented, and let the friends of virtue act in obedience to it, and the work is done.

* A friend who heard this discourse, has kindly suggested to me, that in reviewing it for the press, I ought to "discriminate between adultery, seduction, and fornication." He supposes that the former two are "not sufficiently prevalent in our community to need much animadversion." To speak with technical precision on any subject, and especially on this, can hardly be expected in a popular discourse. Some persons may take occasion to misrepresent, but it is, perhaps, generally understood, or ought to be, notwithstanding the ordinary acceptation of the word, that the term employed in the seventh commandment, covers the whole ground of lewdness. See Matt. vi. 27, 28.

In relation to the prevalence of seduction, I may, perhaps, differ a little from the the opinion of my friend. While I would not be understood to confound it with common prostitution, yet, in most cases, I believe the former is the cause of the latter. The history of females who have surrendered their chastity, warrants the belief, that amid all the ordinary calamities of life, virtue has maintained her firm footing, until assailed and overcome by the insidious arts of the destroyer. If this be true, seduction, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, must somewhere be a prevalent crime.

With the above views, corresponds the opinion of the "Female Benevolent Society of the city of New York," as may be seen from their first annual Report, a valuable document, and one that ought to be extensively circulated. "It cannot be concealed, that the treachery of man, betraying the interests of confiding and dependant woman, is one of the principal causes which furnish the victims of licentiousness. Few, very few, so far as can be ascertained, have sought their wretched calling. The most of them have been betrayed by the perfidy of a pretended friend, and when robbed and despoiled, they have been abandoned to their fate. Tales might be told of deep laid schemes of treachery against female innocence, that would make the ear tingle, and man blush for the baseness of his fellow. One way, then, in which this evil is to be checked at its fountain head, is to brand the seducer with the infamy that he deserves. Upon *his* head should rest the shame and wretched consequences of his criminal conduct. These, almost exclusively, have hitherto been heaped upon the defenceless being, who has been, in a majority of cases, the victim of a base treachery; and who, under a consciousness that she has now no claim to the esteem and society of the virtuous of her sex, has yielded herself in despair to her fate, reckless of the future." Page 20.

Ministers of the gospel, no longer shackled by the false maxims of a dissolute age, nor appalled by the threats of the abandoned, nor awed to silence by the sickly cry of indelicacy, must come to their deserted post of duty, and at the altar of God lift up their voice like a trumpet, and show the people their sins and danger. We have long enough entrusted this business to the satirist and the moralist. Under the ridicule of the one, and the sober lectures of the other, the bloated monster will feed and fatten upon the putresences of the stage, the indecencies of fashion, the facinations of romance, the enchantment of painting, and the witchery of song. Nothing but the majesty of divine truth can inflict the fatal blow. We want the fire and hammer of the word, to break the rock in pieces. We want the sword of the Spirit to penetrate the brazen scales of the serpent. That no great reform in morals can be effected in this country, without the active co-operation of the ministry, must be obvious. The temperance reformation took its rise in the desk. For the first two or three years, and during the mightiest struggle, it was sustained almost wholly by the clergy. My sober conviction is, that the present efforts of a few isolated individuals, scattered over our land to promote purity, will fail, utterly fail, unless ministers of the gospel come forward to their aid. And wo be to us if they should fail for the want of our support! It will be a reproach to our office, which the lapse of centuries cannot wipe away. And then to think of the judgment! To go up thither stained with the blood of souls! O what a day of reckoning to an unfaithful servant! With reference to this subject, I wish often to read my commission, and to have my brethren read it—"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor *speakest* to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand."

Lewdness is a vice, the extermination of which requires, moreover, the aid of the civil law. It has taken its lodgment in a munition of rocks, and there it sits, and simpers, and smiles, and bids defiance to moral suasion. The strong hold must be assailed by the arm of justice, and the culprits brought to punishment. I am happy to see that the Common Council of this city have come out on this subject; and I call upon every virtuous man in community to step forward and sustain

them. I have too much respect for our Police, to indulge for a moment the apprehension, that this movement will terminate in the bare enactment of a law. They will not thus trifle with the good sense and welfare of their fellow citizens. In the pledge they have given to the public, I see evidence that it will be redeemed. It must be redeemed. Cost what it may, the voice of this community will echo back the appeal, and say—go forward, and we pledge our reputation—our honor as men and Christians to sustain you. It is a common cause, and in that cause, fellow citizens, I beg you to unite, and lay aside all party feelings and sectional interests. The reputation of our city is concerned. The value of real estate is concerned. What gentleman of fortune, wishing to educate a family, can be expected to purchase and locate in a place that is constantly infected with the plague? Our domestic and social tranquillity is deeply involved. Whether as parents you enjoy a quiet old age, or whether your gray hairs are brought down in sorrow to the grave, depends, under God, not a little on the posture you now take, in regard to this momentous subject. The safety and respectability of your children—their happiness for this world and the next, are at stake. Let the present crisis pass, and there may be no redemption. The word of God, and the indications of his Providence, demand immediate and decisive action.

I call upon virtuous females, young and old, to step forward and say, the curse shall be removed. You have an influence which you are bound to exert in this cause. Be not intimidated by the siren voice that warns you to keep silence and stand aloof, lest your virtue be suspected. Since the world was made, no woman ever suffered by waging an open and uncompromising war with the pirates of her sex. Indelicacy consists not in exposing vice, but in practising it. True virtue never appears more lovely than when she hurls bolts of thunder against the wretch who ventures to pollute her temple. With system and concert among yourselves, you will find ways and means enough to act, without overstepping the limits of propriety.* Whether men

* Were ladies, regardless of wealth, rank, beauty, and accomplishments, to exclude profligates from their society, the work would be more than half done. Until this step is taken, I see not how any great and lasting reform can be effected. The vice is by no means confined to the lower classes of society. Among the gay, the genteel, the rich, and those who lead the ton in the higher circles of fashionable life, it is shamefully prevalent. Especially in cities, many pass for gentlemen, and receive from virtuous ladies attention and respect, who are well known by reputable men—whose business often prompts them to inquire into

move or not, it is for you to say whether the monster shall live or die. The influence—the power—the weapon is in your hands; and if you dare wield it, you are competent to purify every chamber of imagery, and to strike a blow that shall shiver to atoms every temple of pollution in the land. It is a work of glorious mercy. Heaven smiles upon it. The Son of God, who in grace reclaimed a Mary Magdalen, and brought her a weeping penitent to his feet, has led the way in this reform, and he beckons you to follow him, with the gracious assurance that you shall not labor in vain, nor spend your strength for naught.*

"I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong." You have nobly volunteered in the work of temperance. In that contest you are equipped, marshalled, vigilant, and active. You have eloquence, courage, and perseverance. You have resolved that the land of your

private character—to be "lewd fellows of the baser sort." When the mistake occurs through ignorance, it is certainly pardonable. But alas! in many cases, their character is suspected, and in most, something more than suspicion is entertained by the ladies themselves. But the fear of inquiry—the dread of public surprise at their apparent neglect or impoliteness—overcome their inherent reverence for virtue, and the hand is extended, and the house thrown open to men who are entitled to no respect on any principle of courtesy or religion. Thus virtue indirectly flatters and encourages vice. Its enormity is lessened in the public estimation, and a mis-named charity throws her veil over the whole. The poor, the ignorant, and the vicious, on seeing their unholy fraternity so highly honored in refined society, are emboldened to set up their altars of pollution at every corner of the street. Let ladies, young and old, weigh well their responsibility in relation to this matter. In defiance of custom, whatever may be said by the fastidious and the abettors of crime, the time has come for them to take a bold and elevated stand. Until they can summon resolution to withhold their courtesies, their smiles, and their hands from profligate men, it ill becomes them to raise the cry of *indelicacy* against those who are endeavoring to rescue the honor of their sex from the foul destroyer.

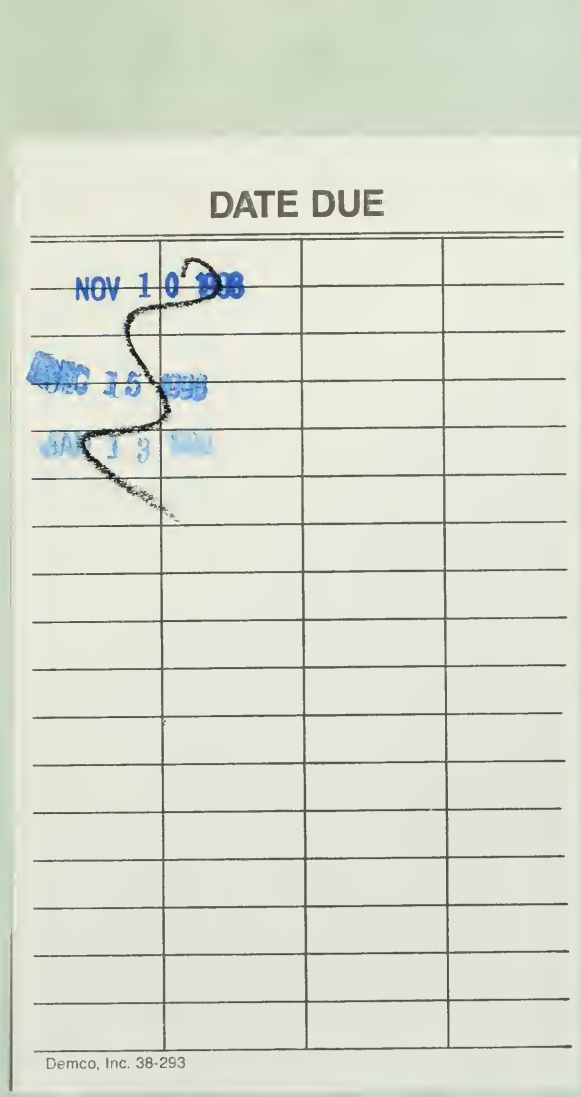
*Because Magdalen efforts have sometimes failed, abandoned females have been thought irreclaimable. The vile of the other sex wish to have it so; and the fearful, the indolent, and the avaricious among virtue's professed friends, are quite willing to believe it true. But it may be well for such persons to consider that the word of God and the history of his Providence are against them. Within a few years, both in this country and Europe, hundreds and thousands of this unhappy class have not only been reclaimed, but many of them have given hopeful evidence of piety. I doubt not but multitudes would imitate their example, if the faith and liberality of humane and kind friends would furnish suitable houses of refuge. Here is the difficulty. The poor prodigals have no character, no home, no friends. The virtuous will not receive them as servants in their families, even if they have health and strength to labor; and there remains for them no alternative but either to pursue their wonted course, or to beg from door to door, and run the hazard of dying in the streets. Why will not the great state of New York, with its multiplied resources, establish a grand asylum for this numerous and wretched portion of her children? If the state will not do it, why will not individuals erect one, as they build colleges and other public institutions? I know of no object on which charity could be better expended.

birth shall no longer be a by-word and a reproach among the nations, as the drunkard's home and the drunkard's grave. But have you ever considered that the enemy with which you contend has a mighty ally in the army of libertines that is stationed in every town and city in the land? Be assured that victory is not yours until that ally is overthrown. Intoxication and lewdness are always confederate. If the one dies, the other will restore it to life. They must both stand or fall together.

If this logic be true—and I appeal to the history of the world for its truth—you will see a reason why I call upon you, as the friends of temperance, to lend a strong hand to arrest the progress of licentiousness. But there are other reasons still more potent, which I have no time to notice. There is no class of citizens who can do more in this department of reform, than virtuous young men. There is none who have greater interests involved in its success.

Were I to suggest a mode of operation, I would say, let a moral society be formed with special reference to this vice. Let rules be prescribed. Let intelligence be circulated. Let discreet and vigorous efforts be made to reclaim profligates among their own number. And if any will not be reclaimed, let them be marked, and shunned, and scouted from society. Let the members of this association, in proper numbers, as apostles of virtue and angels of mercy, enter the highways to hell, scatter tracts and Bibles, and sit down and tell the story of a Saviour's love, and invite despairing sinners to forsake their evil way, and fly to his arms of mercy.

But I must close. This cause is of God, and will prevail. Profligates may sneer, and threaten, and blaspheme, and rave. The timid, the time-serving, and the worldly-prudent, whether in the church, or out of it, may cry imprudence—indelicacy—better be still—better let it alone—it will die of itself—the evil is past remedy. But the hand of the Almighty beckons—go forward. The conflict will be tremendous. But the empire of pollution must fall. Bright omens cheer us—the fire lighted up in many bosoms, has fallen from heaven, and it will burn and spread till the earth is purified, and till virtue re-ascends her throne, and restores the bliss of Eden to the family of man.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